

A comparison of gender role portrayals in magazine advertisements from Germany, Poland and the United States

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Abstract

This study investigates the presence of different types of gender roles (*working* and *nonworking*, *functional*, and *dominance*) in 1861 advertisements coming from German, Polish and American magazines from three genres (general interest, womens, mens magazines) published in 2007. A primary contribution of the paper is the cross-cultural comparison and the inclusion of two European countries in which gender roles in magazine advertising have not been studied previously. Moreover, we include roles studied by other researchers in the past, which allows us to cover a broad variety of different types of roles portrayed in magazines from the studied countries and genres and enables a comparison of our results with previous studies.

All sampled ads were content analyzed and comparisons between genders were carried out separately for each genre in every country by chi-square analysis.

Our main results suggest that women and men are shown in different roles in magazine advertising. In particular, women are by comparison to men heavily underrepresented in recreational and family roles in most of the magazines analyzed. The most common nonworking roles for both men and women are decorative and actors are mostly presented in a symbolic association with the product. As far as dominance is concerned, equality between the genders is the most frequently found relationship in ads from all magazine genres. The data for American general interest magazines showed that the trends from the seventies were reversed; recreational and working roles are no longer dominant in the general interest titles, and the portrayal of traditional roles has given up to equality ads.

Finally, we have found a clear standardization of the portrayed gender roles across magazine genres in all studied countries and very few similarities across different genres within individual countries. This result suggests that each genre portrays a unique set of gender roles. Hence, the collapsing of genres as it has been common in previous research may have hidden some underlying differences in gender roles between genres.

1 Introduction

Advertising is considered to be one of the most powerful visual forces shaping our society. It influences our buying decisions but also ‘sells’ a great deal more: values, addictions, concepts of success, love, sexuality and happiness. This power of advertising stems in large part from the association of the product with a human model. This is often portrayed in an idealized and limited fashion that shows little, if any, correspondence with real life. Advertising has been criticized on this account especially when it comes to the portrayal of gender roles for showing men and women in highly stereotypical fashion.

First criticisms of advertising on this account were raised in the late 1960s by members of the women’s liberation movement in the U.S. (Foster, 1971; Grant, 1970; Mannes, 1970). In response to this critique first analyses of print and broadcasting media were undertaken within the social sciences to put these concerns to the test. Several researchers have concluded that print advertising indeed did not manage to accommodate to the changing roles of men and women in society (Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971; Sexton and Haberman, 1974; Poe, 1976), and that many of the depictions of women were stereotypical, outdated and negative. Once the Pandora’s box of distortions found in advertising was opened many more studies have been conducted since (for a detailed review of the literature see below). Yet, the vast majority of research on gender in advertising up to these days has been based on American samples, thus seriously limiting the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, studies of gender in advertising in additional countries are needed. Another drawback of previous research on gender roles in advertising is the application of very different sampling methods and most importantly the use of different measures in each of the studies, which makes direct comparison of the results difficult.

In the following content analysis of gender roles in magazine advertisements we will address these drawbacks by building upon and including roles studied in previous research. We will also study magazine advertisements in a cross-cultural content analysis of Polish, German and American ads. Gender roles in advertising have to our knowledge not been previously studied in the two selected European countries. Finally, we will pay special attention to and discuss the issue of appropriate sampling and data analysis.

In most general terms, our research question is whether men and women are portrayed to have different roles in advertising and whether they are portrayed differently in different countries and different magazine genres, thus addressing the issue of standardization of gender role portrayals.

2 Literature Review

This study is based on a body of research that has investigated various types of roles and portrayals of men and women in magazine advertising from the early seventies until today. Below we will describe and discuss in more detail only those most relevant to our work.

2.1 Studies on American advertising

One of the most cited studies that responded to the concerns of the female liberation movement was conducted in the early seventies by Courtney and Lockeretz (1971). The researchers have analyzed advertisements appearing in 1970 in eight general interest magazines and have investigated the occupational versus non-occupational roles of men and women. Their findings revealed that only one tenth of women in advertising were presented as workers and all positions held by women were non-professional. In contrast, almost half of men were shown in working roles and the majority of these roles were related to professional occupations. Finally, Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) have identified four negative women's stereotypes that were commonly shown in magazine advertisements: women's place is at home, women do not make important decisions or do important things, women are dependent and need men's protection, and men regard women primarily as sexual objects; they are not interested in women as people (Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971). Later replications of the study revealed persisting negative stereotyping of women found in magazine ads, however, they also recorded a slight improvement in the way women's roles were portrayed in magazine ads (Wagner and Banos, 1973; Culley and Bennett, 1976; Belkaoui and Belkaoui, 1976).

Further studies in the course of time began to reveal less stereotypical portrayals of women in advertising. In their longitudinal study Sexton and Haberman (1974) found an increase in the proportion of women shown in working roles and a large decrease in the frequency of housewife and mother roles. The latter was also confirmed by the study of Venkatesan and Losco (1975). Pingree et al. (1976) were the first to use an ordinal scale of sexism to analyze gender portrayal in advertising, a scale introduced earlier by Butler-Paisler and Paisley-Butler (1974). The scale consisted of five consciousness levels ranging from portrayals of women most limited by stereotypes to free and non-stereotypical portrayals. Their findings revealed that especially the general interest and women's magazines showed more female participation in the 'man's world' over time. Skelly and Lundstrom (1981) using similar coding categories for men as Pingree et al. (1976) for women found a parallel trend showing that men, just like women, have been increasingly portrayed in less stereotypical roles. Also Lysonski (1983), using predefined categories for women's and men's stereotypes reflecting the most frequently present stereotypes in magazine ads, found that advertisers were accommodating somewhat to women's and men's changing social roles; women in non-traditional activities and career-oriented portrayals were found to be much more frequent in the late than in the mid-seventies. The stereotyping of men changed somewhat as well. Over time, portrayals showing men to have sex appeal, exert dominance over women, and constituting figures of authority significantly decreased, while portrayals of men involved in activities outside the home and in non-traditional activities increased.

Researchers have also studied several other aspects of female and male portrayal in magazine ads. Poe (1976) looked into presentations of active women and concluded that advertising 'failed to reflect the social reality of highly skilled women competing seriously with each other in sport' (1976, p. 189). Soley and Kurzbard (1986) found that the percentage of ads with sexual content remained constant over time, but the absolute number of ads containing sexual elements increased in the average issue during the twenty-year period. Women more often than the male

models were portrayed as suggestively clad, partially clad or nude.

In the review of research on gender advertising the contribution by Erving Goffman cannot be omitted (Goffman, 1976). Goffman analyzed displays of men and women using a ‘frame analysis’ i.e. ‘a study of the *images* of pictured women and men reflected in the pose contrived by the photographer’ (Klassen et al., 1993, p. 32). In Goffman’s view elements of a pose like hands, eyes, knees, the positioning of the body etc. form ‘display’ which informs the viewer about the social identity, mood and educates the viewer about acceptable behaviors and gender relationships. Apart from identifying several types of gender displays Goffman (1976) also found that there was no consistent way in which men and women were portrayed in advertisements. For example, in his sample both ‘traditional poses’ (e.g. a man as superior to a woman) and ‘reverse-sex poses’ (e.g. a man doing the dishes) were present. Klassen et al. (1993) drew upon Goffman’s classification of ‘traditional’ (i.e. a man dominant over a woman) versus ‘reverse-sex’ poses (i.e. a woman dominant over a man) and extended it to include one more category of an ‘equality’ pose, where both genders were presented as equals. They investigated advertisements from *Newsweek*, *Ms.* and *Playboy* from 1972 to 1989 and their findings supported the previous studies, e.g. the one by Courtney and Lockeretz (1971), which indicated a disproportionally high number of advertisements portraying women in traditional roles, thus inadequately reflecting the changing role of women in society. However, Klassen and his colleagues also noted an increasing number of ‘equality’ ads since the early 1980s. Moreover, there was a gradual rise of ‘reverse-sex’ ads reported and their share reached ten to fifteen percent of all ads.

The results of further studies on gender in American magazine advertisements are largely consistent with the previous findings and report the presence of gender biases and stereotyping (Ferguson et al., 1990; Busby and Leichty, 1993; Griffin et al., 1994; Wiles et al., 1995; Plous and Neptune, 1997).

2.2 Research outside the U.S.

Content analyses of advertising in countries outside the U.S. were not as frequent as studies on American ads. However, instead of focusing on advertisements published in one country only, researchers from outside the US typically included the U.S. and one or two other countries, thus pointing to the necessity of conducting more comparative research on this topic. These studies revealed several cross-cultural differences, calling into question the generalizability of the above findings from studies conducted in the US (Biswas et al., 1992; Al-Olayan and Karande, 2000; Robbins and Paksoy, 1989; Wiles et al., 1995). On the other hand, Morris (2006) managed to include one-hundred-eight countries in the analysis and found common gender stereotypes in all of them, e.g. women were depicted in domestic scenes and in decorative or ambiguous roles, while men were more frequently portrayed in occupational roles, as spokespeople and at leisure. Overall, these discrepancies further emphasize the need for more comparative studies in this area.

An interesting development was revealed by the study of women’s role portrayals in British advertisements (Lysonski, 1985) which, unlike in the U.S. in the same period studied by Lysonski earlier (1983), did not seem to correspond to the changing careers and roles of women in society: stereotypical images were found to persist in British advertisements until the mid eighties. However, based on a study of British

women's magazines published in 1988, Mitchell and Taylor (1990) claimed that advertisers became increasingly sensitive to the issue of female portrayals, and by the end of the eighties less stereotyping of women as physical objects was recorded.

As stated earlier, there were no English language studies found that the question of stereotypical gender portrayals in German magazine advertising. Two studies, however, provided insights into dominant advertising themes common for both genders in Germany and the U.S. (Robbins and Paksoy, 1989), and reported lower frequency of sexual-oriented content of German magazine ads again compared to the American ones (Piron and Young, 1996).

As in the case of Germany, there is no English language literature available on empirical research of gender stereotypes presented in Polish magazines. We are, however, mentioning at least a descriptive article on the nature of women's stereotypes in Polish media. Kowalczyk (2007) (written in 2001) reported an extended list of women's stereotypes present in the Polish media. She mentioned the traditional stereotypes already given by Courtney and Lockeretz (1971), but also a few recent stereotypes of a woman having roles traditionally reserved for men - e.g., fishing, making a career, getting petrol. Kowalczyk (2007) noticed an optimistic development in the Polish ads: an increasing number of advertisements are breaking the set of traditional stereotypes. Kowalczyk argues, that this is connected to the fact that creators of ads realize that more and more women who receive these ads are in fact modern, independent and career-oriented.

2.3 Summary of findings

The table below presents in brief the major findings of studies on gender stereotypes in magazine advertisements, that were mentioned above.

Table 1: Findings overview of research on gender in magazine advertising

Researchers	Subject of content analysis	Findings
Studies on American advertising (1970-2007)		
<i>Courtney & Lockeretz</i> (1971)	Eight U.S. general interest magazines from 1970	Ads do not reflect working roles women have in the society and stereotype them negatively, in contrast to men shown as workers and professionals.
<i>Wagner & Banos</i> (1973)	Eight U.S. general interest magazines from 1972	Moderation in female working roles but no change in stereotyping. (replication of Courtney & Lockeretz)
<i>Culley & Bennett</i> (1976)	Six U.S. general interest magazines from 1970 & 1974	Increase in the share of women and men in working and professional roles, negative stereotyping of women still present. (replication of Courtney & Lockeretz)
<i>Belkaoui & Belkaoui</i> (1976)	Eight U.S. general interest magazines from 1958, 1970 & 1972	In ads from 1958 (before women's liberation movement) women also mostly unemployed and unprofessional. (replication of Courtney & Lockeretz)
<i>Sexton & Haberman</i> (1974)	Five U.S. magazines of various genres and three periods 1950-1, 1960-1 & 1970-1	Small increase in the share of women in working roles, decrease of housewife and mother roles, however, there is still a narrow range of women's roles.
Continued on the next page		

1: Findings overview of research on gender in magazine advertising

Researchers	Subject of content analysis	Findings
<i>Venkatesan & Losco</i> (1975)	Twelve U.S. magazines from three genres and three periods 1959–62, 1964–68 & 1969–71	Large increase in the portrayal of women's beauty and sexuality, portrayal as housewives and sexual objects declined.
<i>Pingree et al.</i> (1976)	Four U.S. magazines from three genres, 1973–1974	Designed a scale of sexism. Men's magazines rarely show women active in the 'man's world', as opposed to women's magazines.
<i>Skelly & Lundstrom</i> (1981)	Nine U.S. magazines from three genres, November issues from 1959, 1969, 1979	Men's stereotyping has been decreasing over time, parallel to the results for women (see Pingree et al.)
<i>Poe</i> (1976)	Five U.S. magazines from two genres and three Olympic years: 1958, 1956, 1982	Active women are more common in ads over time, yet, women are presented in recreational rather than competitive sports.
<i>Soley & Kurzbard</i> (1986)	Six U.S. magazines from three genres, 1964–1984	Women are more likely to be clad than men. The share of ads with sexual content remains constant over time; sexually suggestive ads more common.
<i>Lysonski</i> (1983)	Twenty-two U.S. magazines from three genres and two periods 1974–5 & 1979–80	Negative stereotyping of women has declined over time but not much. Advertisers seem to accommodate to the changing gender roles.
<i>Goffman</i> (1976)	Purposive selection of American ads from various sources	Main 'behavior displays': relative size, feminine touch, function ranking, family, ritualization of subordination, and licensed withdrawal.
<i>Klassen et al.</i> (1993)	Three U.S. magazines from three genres, 1972–1989	Traditional depictions of men-women relationships were decreasing since 1980s while 'equality' portrayals were rising.
<i>Ferguson et al.</i> (1990)	One U.S. women's magazine 1973–1987	Decorative female portrayals decreased over time, while women shown as sex objects increased. No significant change of traditional ones.
Research outside the U.S. (1980–2007)		
<i>Lysonski</i> (1985)	Fifteen British magazines from three genres, 1976, 1982–3	No dramatic changes in women's stereotypes, main women's themes in both periods are beauty, women shown as sex objects and housewives.
<i>Michell & Taylor</i> (1990)	Three British women's magazines from 1988	Less negative stereotyping of women, more positive ones: family, independent. (replication of Lysonski 1985)
<i>Biswas et al.</i> (1992)	One news and one women's magazine from France and the U.S., 1989–1991	French ads use more humor, emotional and sex appeals than the U.S. ads, which use more information cues.
<i>Wiles et al.</i> (1995)	Six-eight magazines from five genres from each country: the U.S., Sweden and the Netherlands, 1990	In all three countries, men are more often than women shown in working roles. Several country differences discovered. Swedish ads most often show family and recreational roles for both genders, American lead in decorative portrayals and show highest gender differences. (replication of Courtney & Lockeretz)
<i>Al-Olayan & Karande</i> (2000)	Three U.S., ten African and twelve Arab magazines from three genres, 1998	Several statistically significant differences in depictions of men and women between American and Arab advertising.

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1: Findings overview of research on gender in magazine advertising		
Researchers	Subject of content analysis	Findings
<i>Morris</i> (2006)	General interest magazines from 108 countries, one issue per country from a period 2000–2004	Stereotypical gender portrayals are universal. Women have domestic, model, and decorative roles; men are often shown as working, spokespeople or at leisure.
Germany		
<i>Robbins & Paksoy</i> (1989)	Eight magazines from three genres from W.Germany and the U.S., (year unknown)	No standardization of ads; German ads used family setting less and women in business more often than American ones.
<i>Piron & Young</i> (1996)	Four women’s magazines, two from Germany and two from the U.S., 1986–1992	In the studied period American ads used 60% more sexual-oriented than German ads. Explicit sexual stimuli content was decreasing in both.
Poland		
<i>Kowalczyk</i> (2001)	Article on Polish media	The extended list of Polish stereotypes confirms traditional stereotyping from early U.S. studies. Kowalczyk also found new types of women’s portrayal: masculine and humorous roles.

3 Contribution and research questions

3.1 Study’s main contributions

Cross-cultural approach. The literature review of research on gender in magazine advertising presented above has revealed a heavy bias toward the U.S. media content and samples that has been criticized by several authors before (e.g. Abernethy and Franke, 1996; Morris, 2006). Most studies either concentrate on a single country, especially the U.S., or compare the U.S. and one other country. This development seriously limits a possibility of generalization about gender role portrayals in advertising. Moreover, as can be seen from the above overview, there are only very few studies that offer a more extensive cross-cultural comparison (Al-Olayan and Karande, 2000; Morris, 2006; Wiles et al., 1995).

Our study responds to this need for research on gender advertisements from outside the U.S. on the one hand, and provides a broader cross-cultural comparative perspective on the other. In addition to the U.S. we study advertising from Germany and Poland, two countries for which an analysis of stereotypical gender roles in magazine advertising has hardly been conducted.

Stratified analysis. The research on gender in advertising has started with sampling general interest magazines but soon it has extended its scope to include other magazine genres, especially men’s and women’s magazines. The design based on a sample of these three magazine genres (general interest, men’s and women’s titles) was aiming at combining sources of ads that were likely to present gender differently. However, almost all previous studies (except for Pingree et al. (1976) and Klassen et al. (1993)) used this genre differentiation only at the sampling stage and collapsed the genre differences in the final analysis, generalizing from the data to the entire country across all genres. We propose a different approach: the different

genres will be compared to each other within every country. Only if the results turn out to be similar for all genres from a particular country, the data will be joined in a one country pool. The reason is that if differences in the way men and women are presented in different genres persist, the final outcome of the combination of data from all genres is likely to be biased towards the dominant portrayals from a particular genre and would conceal these inter-genre differences.

Multiple gender roles. Multiple aspects of gender as well as different types of gender roles have been studied before. In this content analysis we are combining three types of roles considered by us to be the most important: (1) *working and nonworking roles* (Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971; Wagner and Banos, 1973; Belkaoui and Belkaoui, 1976; Culley and Bennett, 1976; Wiles et al., 1995), (2) *product-related roles* (Sexton and Haberman, 1974; Easton and Toner, 1983; Reese et al., 1987), and (3) *dominance roles* (Goffman, 1976; Klassen et al., 1993), see figure 1 below. We are following this approach instead of generating new roles and new categories with the aim of comparing our results with previous findings and discovering trends in the portrayal of men and women in advertising. Moreover, it will allow us to draw a broader picture of gender portrayal in advertising in the studied countries.

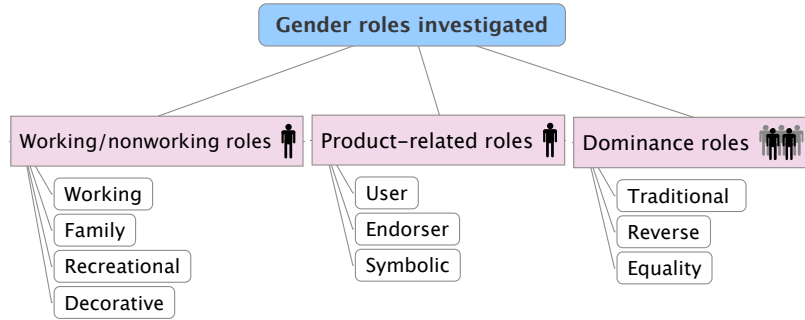


Figure 1: Overview of all gender roles studied

3.2 Research questions

RQ₁: What female and male working/nonworking roles are most often presented in magazine advertisements from Germany, Poland and the U.S., and how do they differ across gender in different magazine genres and countries?

The differentiation between working and nonworking roles in the portrayal of men and women in advertising is one of the most relevant ones. It captures whether both genders are presented to have an equally important role in society by being portrayed in professional occupations. It also reveals whether men and women are shown in nonworking roles (i.e. family, recreational and decorative) to a similar extent. We are using the coding categories developed by Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) and used in subsequent studies.

RQ₂: What female and male product-related roles are most often presented in magazine advertisements from Germany, Poland and the U.S., and how do they differ across gender in different magazine genres and countries?

The roles related to actor's activity or role in a society are not the only ones that can be perceived in advertising. One can also investigate what role men and women play in an ad with respect to the product, i.e. their function. We have distinguished three possible roles within this category. A model can be a *user* of a product, he or she may *endorse* it without using it, or may be totally and also physically detached from the product by having a largely *symbolic* role in the ad. Three other groups of researchers have also studied the functional gender roles in advertising; they used, however, slightly different coding categories (Sexton and Haberman, 1974; Easton and Toner, 1983; Reese et al., 1987).

RQ₃: Are men or women more often depicted to have a dominant role in advertisements from Germany, Poland and the U.S. and which gender is more often portrayed as dominant in different magazine genres in different countries?

Finally, in most of the previous studies the focus was on an individual, a man or a woman, but men and women are also often portrayed in ads together. We are interested in the types of relationships between them and the roles and meanings associated with these portrayals.

The relationship between genders in advertising was studied previously by Goffman (1976) and Klassen et al. (1993). Goffman (1976) created two major categories for ads presenting couples: *traditional* ads in which a man was portrayed to be dominant over a woman, and *reverse-sex* ads, in which a woman was dominant over a man. The third category, *equality*, was added in a study by Klassen et al. and it is a label for an ad in which neither of the genders has the leading role. Klassen et al. (1993) have studied only couples with respect to the relationship role portrayal. We will extend it to include also group relationships.

4 Method

4.1 Sampling frame

Selection of countries. Europe is such a heterogeneous group of countries that it is virtually impossible to pick representative ones. It is possible, however, to select countries in which gender portrayals in magazine advertising are heavily understudied and belong to two distinct European regions. We have selected Germany, one of the largest countries in the Western Europe, and Poland as a major country in the Central/Eastern block. Even though these are neighboring countries they have very different media traditions, history, as well as society in terms of religion, culture and politics. We have decided to include American advertising to enable a comparison of study's findings with the results of previous research. The U.S. is also an important case for it is the world's largest advertiser that concentrates sponsors likely to attempt a standardization across foreign markets (Cutler and Javalgi, 1992).

Selection of magazines. Magazines were chosen for the analysis due to the fact that they are considered to ‘provide high quality, enduring images and strong visual impressions of the models in their advertising’ (Wiles et al., 1995), in contrast to newspapers that contain a substantially smaller number of ads in comparison to the thick and colorful magazines. In early stages of research on gender in advertising researchers have sampled only general interest magazines. Soon, however, this was considered insufficient and other genres were included in the sampling. One of the most balanced genre selections, used by several researchers before (Venkatesan and Losco, 1975; Pingree et al., 1976; Skelly and Lundstorm, 1981; Lysonski, 1985; Soley and Kurzbard, 1986; Klassen et al., 1993), comprises the following three genres: general interest, women’s and men’s magazines. Examination of general interest magazines reveals the ways in which the genders are presented to each other, while men’s and women’s magazines may give better insights into how the genders are presented to themselves. As a result, the two last genres may differ considerably from each other and from the general interest magazines in the portrayal of men and women. The general interest magazines, on the other hand, should contain a more balanced portrayal of genders designed for a target group composed of both male and female readers. This explains why the three-genre design is a popular choice; it is able to avoid a bias resulting from a single-gender audience.

Table 2: Magazines under study

	Germany	Poland	The U.S.
General interest	<i>Der Spiegel</i> <i>Focus</i>	<i>Polityka</i> <i>Wprost</i>	<i>Time</i> <i>Newsweek</i>
Magazines for women	<i>Cosmopolitan</i> <i>Elle</i>	<i>Twoj Styl</i> <i>Joy</i>	<i>Cosmopolitan</i> <i>O, The Oprah Magazine</i>
Magazines for men	<i>Playboy</i> <i>Men’s Health</i>	<i>CKM</i> <i>Playboy</i>	<i>Playboy</i> <i>Maxim</i>

All selected magazines satisfied the following criteria. First, they had the highest circulation in the respective country and genre, based on 2006 data¹. Second, only monthlies were included in the analysis with the exception of general interest magazines which are more news oriented and therefore in all three countries are issued more often as weeklies. Third, women’s magazines are more diverse than other genres and there was a need to narrow down this category. We analyzed only the luxurious titles, i.e. magazines with a focus on fashion and beauty, rather than titles belonging to the home and lifestyle category. These titles are more expensive and consequently might have a smaller circulation than the cheaper magazines with house, gossip and everyday themes, but they are thicker and contain considerably more advertising content, which is crucial for the study. These are also the luxurious women’s magazines that were frequently investigated in the previous studies (Klassen et al., 1993; Lysonski, 1985; Robbins and Paksoy, 1989; Venkatesan and Losco, 1975; Wiles et al., 1995). The final selection of magazines is presented in the table 2 above.

¹The source of circulation data for Germany was IVW - Informationsgemeinschaft zur Feststellung der Verbreitung von Werbeträgern e.V.; Poland - Związek Kontroli Dystrybucji Prasy; and the U.S. - Magazine Publishers of America, data audited by Audit Bureau of Circulations.

Selection of magazine issues. Communication is an ongoing process and to be able to understand the forces shaping it one has to examine the content at various times (Riffe et al., 1998). In this study, four issues of each magazine published in 2007 were included, in total 72 magazines. For the selection of monthlies, i.e. men's and women's magazines, a criterion sample was used: the first issue of each season was included (issues available and purchased in the first week of March, June, September and December 2007). For the weekly general interest magazines we used a random sample giving an equal chance of choosing any issue out of 52 issues published in 2007. A random number generator was used to select four random weeks. The final selection is: week 10, 19, 39 and 42.

4.2 Content analysis

4.2.1 Coding procedure

A detailed coding protocol was developed and improved in two coder trainings and a summary of its final version is presented in the following. The unit of analysis was any advertisement *larger* than half a page and containing at least one adult man or woman, as smaller sized ads were difficult to analyze. If two actors were present in an ad, each person was coded separately. In case three or more people were present in an ad, only the two most important and salient persons were coded (one man and one woman in mixed-gender ads).

Formal content of an ad pertaining to advertisement's origin was coded first; the variables included *magazine title*, *magazine issue*, *magazine genre*, *country* the magazine was published in, and finally the *page number*.

As the second step, ad-related content variables were reported and included *brand name* and *product type*, as well as *actor* and actor's *gender*.

The final and most important set of variables was related to the research questions and contained the following interpretative variables: *working/nonworking role*, *workers (occupations)*, *product-related gender role* and *dominance gender role* (coded separately for couples and groups of more than two people). The *working/nonworking role* variable was adopted from Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) and investigated whether the actor was in a working or one of the nonworking roles: family, recreational or decorative role. In case a person was found to be shown as working, then the variable *workers (occupations)* allowed for distinguishing between the following groups of occupations: higher level business; higher level professional; lower level professional; entertainment, art and sport professionals; lower level business; soldiers and police; non-professional white collar; blue collar. The *product-related gender role* variable determined whether the actor was using an advertised product, endorsing an advertised product or had a symbolic role. Finally, the *dominance gender role* follows the work of Goffman (1976) and Klassen et al. (1993) and determines whether men or women are presented as dominant over the other gender in the ad, or alternatively whether they are presented as equals. Values and labels of all interpretative variables are shown in table 3. Examples of coded advertisements are in appendix A.

Table 3: Overview of the interpretative variables

No.	Variable name	Values and labels	Descriptions and examples
1	Working/ nonworking role*	1 - Working 2 - Family 3 - Recreational 4 - Decorative	actor is presented while doing the job, or wearing a work uniform actor is shown in a family context, e.g. with children actor is depicted while doing sports actor does not have any of the above roles and is a decoration only
2	Workers (occupations)	1 - Higher level business 2 - Higher level professional 3 - Lower level professional 4 - Entertainment, art and sport professionals 5 - Lower level business 6 - Soldiers, police 7 - Non-professional white collar 8 - Blue collar	e.g. manager, consultant e.g. physician, engineer e.g. nurse, masseur/masseus e.g. TV presenter, football player e.g. salesperson e.g. secretary, steward e.g. construction worker, farmer
3	Product-related role	1 - User 2 - Endorser 3 - Symbolic role	actor is actively involved with the product and uses it in the way it should be used actor is recommending the product often by holding it (not using) actor is portrayed to be detached from the product (no physical contact)
4	Dominance role**	1 - Traditional 2 - Reverse 3 - Equality	a man dominant over a woman a woman dominant over a man men and women are equal
*Variable developed by Courtney & Lockeretz (1971)			
**Variable developed after Klassen et al. (1993) and Goffman (1976)			

4.2.2 Inter-rater reliability

All advertisements were coded by one of the female authors and approximately 12% of advertisements were analyzed by the second male coder. Having a male and female coder was a necessary criterion for avoiding a gender bias in the analysis of data, especially with regard to judging the gender dominance portrayals. Kappa was used to test the inter-rater agreement. An almost perfect agreement was found for the *ad-related content variables* (product .857, actor .990, gender .984) and one *interpretative variable* (workers .856), and a substantial agreement for the remaining *interpretative variables* (gender role .633, workers (occupations) .856, product-related role .735, dominance role (couple) .772, dominance role (group) .710 (interpretation of kappa is based on the suggestions by Landis & Koch, 1977)²).

5 Results

We will first present an overview of the collected data including a comparison of some general characteristics of different magazine genres in different countries, and

² *Dominance gender role* was at first coded separately for ads depicting couples versus ads with groups of more than two people, however, in the analysis they were merged into one variable.

next we will report the results for each of the research questions separately.

5.1 Overview of the collected data

Overall 1861 advertisements, that fulfilled the criteria mentioned above, were coded and analyzed: 863 ads from Germany, 322 from Poland and 676 from the United States. In these ads 2321 actors were studied: 1510 women and 811 men.

Table 4: General characteristics of different magazine genres

Country	Magazine genre	Thickness	Ad concentration %	Men only %	Women only%
Germany	General interest	209,5	10,4	58	18,4
	Women's magazines	276,3	24,1	4,9	81,4
	Men's magazines	192,1	10,1	66,6	10,9
Poland	General interest	130,3	6,3	47	27,3
	Women's magazines	205	10,4	2,3	83
	Men's magazines	161	6,6	45,8	29,5
The U.S.	General interest	84,8	9,1	42	41,9
	Women's magazines	295,8	19,4	7,2	82,7
	Men's magazines	180	10,8	46,8	19,2
Basis: 1861 advertisements					
<i>Thickness</i> – mean number of pages in a magazine from this genre					
<i>Ad concentration</i> – number of pages with analyzed ads as a percentage of total number of pages in a magazine from this genre					
<i>Men only/women only</i> – number of ads containing one or more actors of one gender as a share of total number of ads in a magazine from this genre, mixed-gender ads excluded					

It appears from the overview in table 4 that most of the characteristics of magazine genres presented above are consistent among the three studied countries. First, in all cases the women's magazines appear to be by far the thickest compared to other genres and contain the highest concentration of advertisements. Second, the women's magazines all used only women in more than 80% of ads. Third, the general interest and men's magazines all have a very similar ad concentration and feature substantially more men than women in their ads, with the exception of American general interest magazines where the proportion of women in the ads is almost equal to the proportion of men.

5.2 Working and nonworking roles

RQ₁: What female and male working/nonworking roles are most often presented in magazine advertisements from Germany, Poland and the U.S., and how do they differ across gender in different magazine genres and countries?

We have found a statistically significant difference between gender portrayals in working and nonworking roles across the studied countries ($\chi^2 = 4875,5$; $df = 9$; $p < 0,001$) and magazine genres ($\chi^2 = 4967,2$; $df = 9$; $p < 0,001$). Therefore, in the following discussion neither the distinction between countries nor genres will be collapsed and we will investigate gender differences in the portrayal of working and nonworking roles both in different genres and in different countries.

Table 5 reports detailed frequencies of the working and nonworking roles found in the studied magazines as well as detailed tests investigating whether there are

significant differences in the portrayal of working/nonworking roles between men and women in different magazine genres in different countries. All nine tests indicate significant differences between gender portrayals.

Table 5: Observed frequencies of working and nonworking roles of men and women

Country	Magazine genre	Actor's gender	Working role %	Family role %	Recreational role %	Decorative role %	N
Germany	General interest	M	12,6	7,3	9,3	70,9	151
		F	11,1	4,7	1,4	77,8	72
	$\chi^2 = 278,8; df = 6; p < 0,001$						
	Women's magazines	M	7,9	3	6,9	82,2	101
		F	1,1	0,4	1,3	97,3	546
	$\chi^2 = 1697,0; df = 6; p < 0,001$						
	Men's magazines	M	2,1	3,4	5,5	89	145
		F	3,8	1,9	3,8	90,4	52
	$\chi^2 = 435,4; df = 6; p < 0,001$						
	General interest	M	14,8	5,6	5,6	74,1	54
		F	13,5	5,4	2,7	78,4	37
	$\chi^2 = 133,9; df = 6; p < 0,001$						
Poland	Women's magazines	M	0	6,9	0	93,1	29
		F	0,6	1,7	2,2	95,5	178
	$\chi^2 = 472,0; df = 6; p < 0,001$						
	Men's magazines	M	7,7	1,5	9,2	81,5	65
		F	0	2	6,1	91,8	49
	$\chi^2 = 228,8; df = 6; p < 0,001$						
The U.S.	General interest	M	31,7	9,8	12,2	46,3	41
		F	16,7	13,9	5,6	63,9	36
	$\chi^2 = 117,1; df = 6; p < 0,001$						
	Women's magazines	M	14,3	10,7	3,6	71,4	84
		F	2,2	2,6	1,7	93,4	458
	$\chi^2 = 1059,1; df = 6; p < 0,001$						
	Men's magazines	M	5	0	15,6	79,4	141
		F	3,7	0	2,4	93,9	82
	$\chi^2 = 437,8; df = 6; p < 0,001$						
Total actors (N)			116	71	98	2036	2321
<i>Working role</i> – actor is presented while doing his/her job or wearing a work uniform							
<i>Family role</i> – actor is shown in a family context e.g., with children, grandparents							
<i>Recreational role</i> – actor is depicted while doing sports							
<i>Decorative role</i> – actor does not have any of the above roles and is a decoration only							
<i>M</i> - male, <i>F</i> - female							

Decorative roles. Across all magazine genres, both genders are most frequently portrayed in a decorative role, the category that has little to do with physical activity or any important social roles. The proportions are the highest in women's and men's magazines across all countries (ranging from 71,4% to 97,3%), however, in all magazine genres from all the countries there are slightly more women found in decorative roles than men, which means that overall slightly more men than women fit into the remaining three categories (working, family and recreational roles).

Working roles. In all countries studied, people in working roles are portrayed most frequently in advertisements from the general interest magazines. In American titles from this genre the proportion of working men outweighs the proportion of working women almost by two. By contrast, in Germany and Poland the percentages

of men and women portrayed in working roles in the general interest genre are almost equal.

The results for the remaining American genres are consistent with the findings for the general interest magazines, i.e. the proportion of men portrayed in ads as workers outweighs the proportion of women, the difference being smallest in men's magazines. In German men's magazines women are slightly more often shown in working roles, while men are more often shown as workers in the women's magazines. In Poland, both genders portrayed in working roles are equally underrepresented in ads from the women's magazines, whereas in the men's genre there are more men than women shown as workers, as in the case of the U.S.

All in all, in advertisements from American magazines the discrepancies between the proportion of men shown as workers in comparison to the share of female workers are the highest and found in all genres. The results for Poland and Germany show similarities between the percentages of men and women shown in the working roles in two out of three genres.

Family roles. Actors shown in a family setting are the least commonly portrayed nonworking roles and the differences between genders depicted in this category are also rather small. Yet, an interesting result is that in advertisements from the women's magazines from all countries there are more men than women found in family roles. The results for the remaining magazine genres in all countries are mixed.

Recreational roles. With regard to the portrayal of actors practicing sports, the results are very straightforward. In advertisements from all magazine genres in all three countries, except for Polish women's magazines, men are more often portrayed in recreational roles than women. The highest discrepancy between the frequency of the portrayal of men versus women doing sports was found in American general interest and men's magazines, as well as German general interest and women's magazines.

Working roles – occupational differentiation. Even though actors in working roles were commonly found in advertisements from general interest magazines, overall they were only rarely portrayed in this role; only 5% of all actors in all ads were shown as workers. Due to this scarcity of representations of occupational roles we cannot further investigate detailed differences in types of occupations most commonly represented by each gender. Table 6 below presents this scarcity. Moreover, no chi-square calculations were done for any gender differences in any of the genres, as the expected counts for all genre categories were too low (ranging from 0 to 2,7).

5.3 Product-related roles

RQ₂: What female and male product-related roles are most often presented in magazine advertisements from Germany, Poland and the U.S., and how do they differ across gender in different magazine genres and countries?

Table 6: Observed frequencies of portrayed occupations of men and women

Country	Magazine genre	Actor's gender	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	N
Germany	General interest	M	6	3	1	1	2	-	6	19
		F	2	2	-	-	-	3	1	8
	Women's magazines	M	-	2	-	1	3	2	-	8
		F	-	1	2	-	-	3	-	6
	Men's magazines	M	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3
		F	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2
Poland	General interest	M	3	3	-	1	-	-	1	8
		F	2	-	2	1	-	-	-	5
	Women's magazines	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		F	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Men's magazines	M	2	-	-	1	-	-	2	5
		F	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
The U.S.	General interest	M	4	-	-	-	4	1	4	13
		F	3	2	-	-	-	1	-	6
	Women's magazines	M	-	5	-	1	1	1	4	12
		F	3	6	-	-	-	1	-	10
	Men's magazines	M	-	3	-	-	2	1	1	7
		F	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	3
Total actors (N)			26	27	8	6	12	16	21	116
A: Higher level business; B: Higher level professional; C: Lower level professional; D: Entertainment, art and sport professionals; E: Soldiers, police; F: Non-professional white collar; G: Blue collar M - male, F - female										

There is a statistically significant difference between gender portrayals in product-related roles across country ($\chi^2 = 1047, 1$; $df = 6$; $p < 0,001$) and magazine genre ($\chi^2 = 1102, 2$; $df = 6$; $p < 0,001$). As in the case of the previously discussed roles, we are therefore investigating gender differences in different magazine genres in all countries separately. Table 7 shows results of nine significance tests, all of which indicate significant differences between gender portrayals for every genre category in each country.

Symbolic roles. Symbolic role portrayal is the most often found category overall, as it includes all advertisements that did not fit into the previous two; this category's frequency ranges from 38,2% to 94,4%. More women than men are categorized to have a symbolic role in the general interest and men's magazines, whereas more men than women are found to be presented in the symbolic role in all women's magazines.

User roles. Our data show that across all countries men are more often portrayed as users of products in general interest and men's magazines, the discrepancies between the genders being lower in men's magazines. On the other hand, women are more often shown as users in the women's magazines.

Endorser roles. The endorsing role is overall the least frequently shown, and gender differences seem less pronounced than for user roles. In the majority of magazines in all countries the difference between the proportion of men and women shown in an endorsing role is very small. Sizable differences worth reporting result

Table 7: Observed frequencies of product-related roles of men and women

Country	Magazine genre	Actor's gender	User %	Endorser %	Symbolic role %	N
Germany	General interest	M	23,3	5,3	71,5	151
		F	16,7	5,6	77,8	72
	Women's magazines			$\chi^2 = 171, 7; df = 4; p < 0, 001$		
		M	35,6	5,9	58,4	101
		F	56,2	5,3	38,2	546
				$\chi^2 = 260, 7; df = 4; p < 0, 001$		
	Men's magazines	M	39,3	4,8	55,9	145
		F	32,7	5,8	61,5	52
		$\chi^2 = 83, 2; df = 4; p < 0, 001$				
Poland	General interest	M	22,2	7,4	70,4	54
		F	10,8	8,1	81,1	37
	Women's magazines			$\chi^2 = 73, 1; df = 4; p < 0, 001$		
		M	27,6	0	72,4	29
		F	43,8	3,9	52,2	178
				$\chi^2 = 94, 4; df = 4; p < 0, 001$		
	Men's magazines	M	36,9	6,2	56,9	65
		F	30,6	10,2	59,2	45
		$\chi^2 = 43, 3; df = 4; p < 0, 001$				
The U.S.	General interest	M	7,3	7,3	85,4	41
		F	2,8	2,8	94,4	36
	Women's magazines			$\chi^2 = 110, 5; df = 4; p < 0, 001$		
		M	11,9	6	82,1	84
		F	35,6	5,7	58,7	458
				$\chi^2 = 284, 9; df = 4; p < 0, 001$		
	Men's magazines	M	27,5	6	66,5	141
		F	7,3	12,2	80,5	82
		$\chi^2 = 151, 3; df = 4; p < 0, 001$				
Total actors (N)			826	137	1358	2321
<i>User</i> – actor is actively involved with the product and uses it in the way the product is designed to be used						
<i>Endorser</i> – actor is recommending the product (without using it) often by holding it						
<i>Symbolic role</i> – actor is portrayed as detached from the product (no physical contact)						
<i>M</i> - male, <i>F</i> - female						

only in three cases. Polish and American men's magazines portray more women than men as endorsers, while American general interest magazine show a man more often than a woman in an endorsing role.

Product-related roles in different product categories. Due to the fact that overall most of the actors in ads do not have any important role in relation to the product, but have a symbolic role instead, we further explored whether product-related roles are related to the advertised product. As presented in table 8 the ads of most product categories present actors predominantly in a symbolic role. For instance, financial services tend to rely almost completely on symbolic roles (98,9%), which is probably due to the nature of the product advertised; it is difficult to depict actors 'using' a health insurance or investment company. However, further top categories of products featuring actors predominantly in symbolic roles include: drugs (94,3%), media and entertainment (93,5%), home appliances (87,5%), furniture and house elements (84,6%), beauty products (83,7%), food (70,4%), and cars (67,8%). The fact that such products like home appliances, cars and food are advertised with-

out an image of a person using them, but instead include a decorative mannequin beside the product was unexpected.

Table 8: Observed frequencies of product-related roles in different product categories (for both men and women)

Product	User %	Endorser %	Symbolic role %	N
Beauty products	12,3	4	83,7	632
Clothing	90,5	1,1	8,4	570
Accessories	71,3	9,8	19	174
Cars	23	9,2	67,8	87
Travel	15,5	3,4	81	58
Sports equipment	60	0	40	10
Financial services	0	1,2	98,8	83
Other services	23,4	2,8	73,8	141
Cleaning supplies	50	0	50	2
Home appliances	6,2	6,2	87,5	16
Personal and office appliances	13,7	17,6	68,6	102
Furniture and house elements	7,7	7,7	84,6	13
Media and entertainment	5,6	0,8	93,5	124
Industrial products	0	0	100	4
Drugs	2,3	3,4	94,3	88
Food products	7,4	22,2	70,4	27
Non-alcoholic drinks	25	37,5	37,5	32
Alcoholic beverages	0	40,3	59,7	67
Cigarettes	7,1	3,6	89,3	28
Charity	0	0	100	1
Institutional ads	5	2,5	92,5	40
Other	0	13,6	86,4	22
Total	826	137	1358	2321

5.4 Dominance roles

RQ₃: Are men or women more often depicted to have a dominant role in advertisements from Germany, Poland and the U.S. and which gender is more often portrayed as dominant in different magazine genres in different countries?

The portrayal of dominance roles differs significantly across countries ($\chi^2 = 247,6$; $df = 6$; $p < 0,001$) and magazine genres ($\chi^2 = 263,8$; $df = 6$; $p < 0,001$). Moreover, there is a statistically significant association between type of dominance role and magazine genre for each of the studied countries separately, see table 9.

The table below shows that in all magazine genres from all countries the equality portrayal is the most frequent one, its share ranging from 62,3% to 100%. The highest proportions of equality portrayal are found in all three general interest magazines as well as German men's titles.

However, some very interesting patterns are discernible when comparing the second most often found dominance portrayal, traditional and reverse ads. In all of the studied countries women's magazines contain more reverse portrayals than traditional ones, while in the men's and general interest magazines (with the exception of American general interest magazines) it is exactly the opposite, the difference between the share of traditional and reverse ads being more moderate in German

Table 9: Observed frequencies of dominance roles in magazine advertisements

Country	Magazine genre	Traditional %	Reverse %	Equality %	N
Germany	General interest	9,8	7,3	82,9	41
	Women's magazines	2,7	31,5	65,8	73
	Men's magazines	14,3	0	85,7	35
$\chi^2 = 133,3; df = 6; p < 0,001$					
Poland	General interest	11,1	5,6	83,3	18
	Women's magazines	0	20	80	25
	Men's magazines	27,3	4,5	68,2	22
$\chi^2 = 60,1; df = 6; p < 0,001$					
The U.S.	General interest	0	0	100	10
	Women's magazines	2,2	21,7	76,1	46
	Men's magazines	20,8	17	62,3	53
$\chi^2 = 60,6; df = 6; p < 0,001^*$					
Total ads (N)		31	52	240	323

*Chi-square is based on women's and men's genre only. In American general interest magazines the numbers of ads and hence the expected frequencies are very low and therefore they are not included in the analysis

Traditional – a man (men) is (are) portrayed as dominant over woman (women)

Reverse – a woman (women) is (are) portrayed as dominant over man (men)

Equality – a man (men) and a woman (women) are portrayed to be equals

general interest magazines and American men's titles, see figure 2 for a visualization of this pattern. The highest proportions of reverse ads are found in women's magazines and American men's titles, while the highest shares of traditional roles are found in all men's titles.

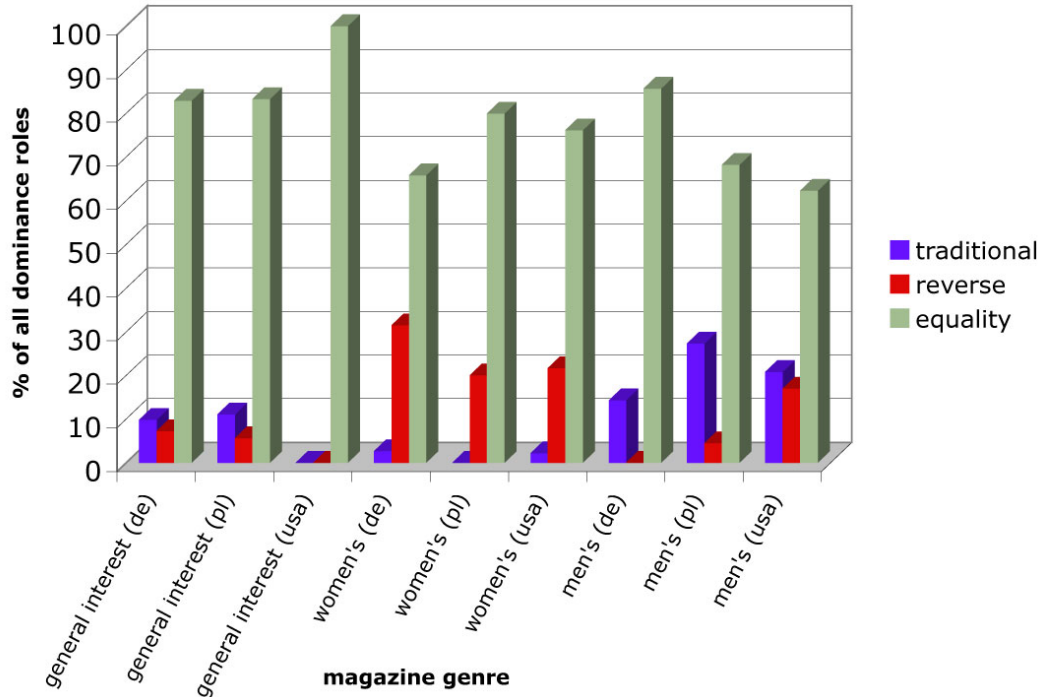


Figure 2: Frequency of the portrayal of dominance roles in magazine advertisements from different genres (2007).

6 Discussion and conclusions

6.1 Working and nonworking roles - revealing trends

As was already mentioned in the literature review, the working and nonworking gender roles were first studied by Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) in advertisements from the American general interest magazines; subsequently, the same roles were analyzed in further years by Wagner and Banos (1973), Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976), and Culley and Bennett (1976). Even though these studies have used a different sample of general interest magazines than the current research, our results can be compared with those of previous studies due to the fact that we are studying the same genre and our sample (*Newsweek*, *Time*) is comparable to the sample of the original studies (*Life*, *Look*, *The New Yorker*, *Saturday Review*, *U.S. New and World Report*, *Newsweek* and *Time*)³. Based on the results of this study as well as of previous studies we are able to construct a trend of change in the proportions of working and nonworking roles portrayed in American general interest magazines. Our results for the remaining American genres, as well as for Germany and Poland are the pioneering ones.

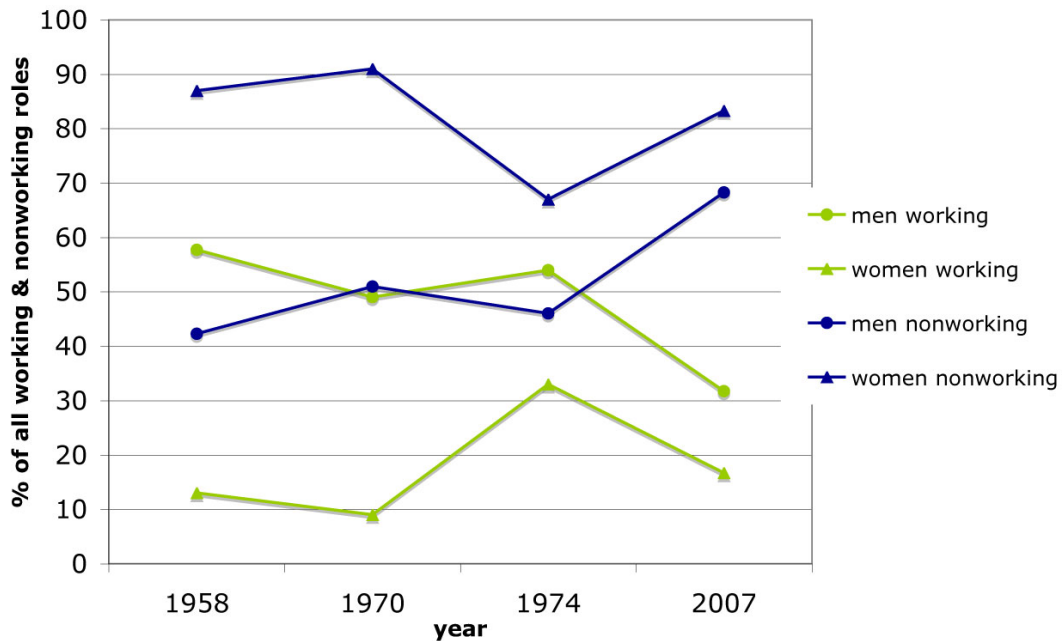


Figure 3: Comparison of the proportions of working and nonworking roles of men and women in American general interests magazines derived from different studies: 1958 – Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976), 1970 – Courtney and Lockeretz (1971), 1974 – Culley and Bennett (1976), 2007 – current research). *The percentage of working and nonworking roles has decreased substantially in 2007 for both men and women, as a result of which the proportion of nonworking roles has increased for both groups.*

³*Life* and *Look* were excluded in the analysis by Culley and Bennett (1976), due to the fact that they were no longer published in 1974.

Working roles. Our data show that in all studied countries men and women were most often portrayed in working roles in advertisements from the general interest magazines. In German and Polish general interest magazines the proportion of men as well as women shown as workers was almost equal (ranging from 11,1% to 14,8%), which implies that in these two countries in the genre read by both men and women there is no gender bias towards male workers.

The picture is different, however, in the case of the U.S. where the proportion of women shown as workers (16,7%) was close to the percentages in the other two studied countries but it was almost twice as low as the proportion of male workers (31,7%). Early studies on gender role portrayal in American general interest magazines have revealed similar biases, the discrepancy between men and women ranging from 1,6-fold in 1974 (Culley and Bennett, 1976) to five-fold in 1970 (Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971). The data derived from the studies conducted in the 1970s (as shown in figure 3⁴) gave an optimistic outlook for the proportion of women shown as workers, however, our results show that even though this proportion had a generally rising tendency, it has dropped by the year 2007. Along with it the proportion of male workers dropped as well, yet, there was still a two-fold discrepancy between the proportion of male and female workers. It seems that the problem American researchers were alarmed about almost four decades ago remains valid today for the U.S. general interest magazines; women shown in ads are still underrepresented in professional roles.

As far as other genres are concerned, a ‘traditional’ gender bias was recorded for German and American women’s magazines, as well as men’s magazines from all three countries. However, the remaining two genres, German men’s and Polish women’s magazines, managed somehow to stay away from such a biased portrayal. Nevertheless, it seems evident that where occupational roles are concerned, women in most of the magazines are still underrepresented. The most non-discriminatory genres, as far as working roles are concerned, are the German and Polish general interest titles.

Family roles. Contrary to what might have been intuitively expected, that women traditionally would be more often portrayed in family situations than men, early American studies analyzing general interest magazines have shown that the proportion of men portrayed in family roles was equal to the proportion of women shown in family settings, and this relationship remained constant from 1958 through 1970 to 1974 (Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971; Belkaoui and Belkaoui, 1976; Culley and Bennett, 1976). In our 2007 study a close similarity in the proportion of family roles was found only in the Polish general interest and men’s magazines. In American general interest magazines there were more women than men portrayed in family roles (14,3% for men and 16,7% of women), and a general decrease in these proportions as compared to previous findings was recorded.⁵ Even though the difference

⁴The graph in figure 3 is only a visual representation of results from different studies. It should be kept in mind that the studies quoted are not based on the same magazine samples. However, they were all based on advertisements from the general interest magazines, selected using the same criteria, and were coded using the same categories.

⁵The percentages for 2007 are not the same as in table 5 presented above, because they were calculated differently so as to be directly comparable with the results of previous researchers. That is, the frequencies of nonworking roles (family, recreational and decorative roles) are shown as a

between the proportion of men and women portrayed in family roles is not large, the gap between the two has extended as compared to the studies conducted in the seventies (see the comparison over time in figure 4).

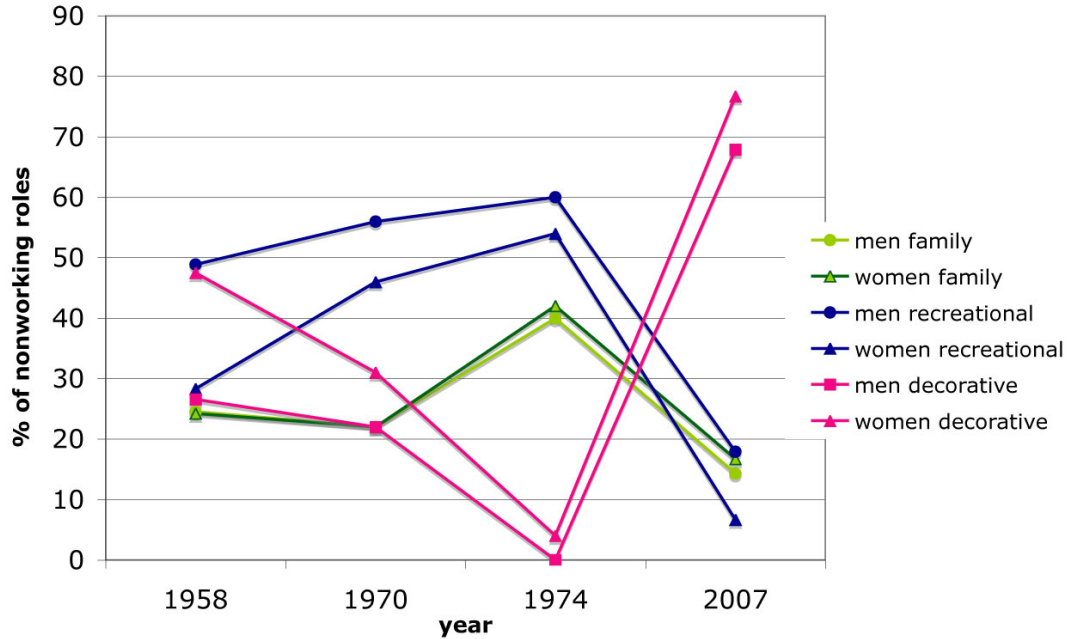


Figure 4: Comparison of the proportions of nonworking roles of men and women in American general interests magazines derived from studies: 1958 – Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976), 1970 – Courtney and Lockeretz (1971), 1974 – Culley and Bennett (1976), 2007 – current research). *All trends that have been developing in a certain direction throughout the 1950s and 1970s have been reversed by the findings from the current study; the most frequently portrayed nonworking role in magazines analyzed in 2007 is by far the decorative role, both family and recreational roles occupy the lowest percentages. As far as gender differences are concerned, more women than men are found in family roles, while the proportion of men outweighs the proportion of women in recreational roles.*

The opposite result was found for German general interest magazines, where there were more men than women in family settings in each genre. Polish general interest magazines had almost equal shares of family portrayals of men and women.

Analyzing other genres has revealed that in all studied countries women's magazines featured more men than women in family roles, which might imply that ads in women's magazines have given up on portraying women in traditional family settings but continue to promote an image of a loving husband and father, as a desirable type of man for any woman. Men's magazines, on the other hand, present family roles rarely: none were found in the American magazines in our sample, while similar numbers for men and women were recorded in Polish and German titles.

percentage of nonworking roles only, and not as in table 5, as a percentage of all roles including the working ones.

Recreational roles. As opposed to previous categories for which mixed findings for genres and countries were common, the results for recreational roles are much simpler. There are more men portrayed while doing sports than women in advertisements from all genres in all countries (with the exception of Polish women's magazines), hence, there is clear evidence for a gender bias towards men being presented as more active and fit than women.

This bias is consistent with findings for American general interest magazines from 1950s and 1970s, yet overall the proportion of men and women shown in recreational roles in these magazines was a few times higher than nowadays. As in the case of family roles, the overall shares of recreational roles have decreased as compared to previous findings in the 1970s and this was also the largest decrease out of all other nonworking roles. A possible explanation for both of these drops could be a large increase in the proportion of decorative roles, that may have simply become more popular among advertisers.

Decorative roles. In all genres this is the most often portrayed nonworking gender role, which highlights the fact that men and women in the ads are most often shown just for decoration purposes and their societal roles are not that crucial.

For the American general interest magazines, the share of decorative roles shown is much higher than in the fifties and seventies. For comparison, the share of decorative roles for men and women respectively was 26,6% and 47,5% in 1958 (Belkaoui and Belkaoui, 1976), 22% and 31% in 1970 (Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971), and 0% and 4% in 1974 (Culley and Bennett, 1976). In 2007, the numbers are 67,9% for men and 76,7% for women.⁶

Summary. As described above the results found in the American general interest magazines in 2007 differ considerably from the findings in studies conducted in the 1970s (see figure 4). Several short-term trends that were revealed by data from the 1950s and 1970s are reversed by the results in 2007: the proportions of women and men portrayed in working, family and recreational roles are all lower than they were in the previously studied years. At the expense of all these roles the proportion of decorative roles rose dramatically. Our data provides an important comparison to these previous studies and moreover, our analysis shows that there is a significant association between gender and the gender role portrayed in American general interest magazines that has not been investigated before.

With regard to the relationship between women and men, the difference between the proportion of men and women in working roles has remained more or less the same, the gap has widened in the two remaining roles: more women are portrayed in family roles than men, and more men than women are shown doing sports.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of systematic analyses using the same coding scheme for the two decades in between the 1970s and the current time, we cannot study the development of working and nonworking gender roles step by step, i.e. in small time intervals, that would show fluctuations in the data or reversals of previous trends over time.

⁶Due to the overwhelming proportion of decorative roles found, in further studies this category could be differentiated into other types of portrayals referring for example to body language, posture and the like.

The overall drop in the percentages of working and nonworking roles of men and women from the 1970s can be partly explained by the large increase in the proportions of actors portrayed in the last category, i.e. decorative roles. It seems that currently there is a much weaker emphasis in advertising on portraying men and women having any significant societal roles or being physically active, and the primary role of the models is being a mere background. This seems to be a phenomena not only limited to the American case, but is also found in German and Polish advertising, where the proportions of actors portrayed in decorative roles are even higher than in the American magazines.

6.2 Product-related roles

In our sample of magazines we have found that most of men and women are primarily shown to have a symbolic relation to the product. This means that in a large number of ads (58,5%) people do not use, touch or recommend the product. They are portrayed in the ads often having no relevance to the product but are part of a scenery that is aimed at attracting the viewer's attention and appealing to his or her wishes and dreams. As we have presented in table 8 in the previous section, this seems to be independent of a product. Even ads of food and house appliances present actors as detached from the product.

As far as user roles are concerned, we have found that in ads from general interest and men's magazines from all three countries men are significantly more often shown as users than women. This hints at a traditional portrayal of men as having more important functions than pure decoration. Even though the frequency of men shown in working roles seems to have diminished, in two genres they still hold an important role with respect to the product. In women's magazines these are women who are more often portrayed as users. This seems to have a lot to do with types of products advertised in different genres. Men's and general interest titles advertise a larger variety of products while in women's magazines three groups of advertisements, those of beauty products, clothing and accessories, are predominant (77 % of all ads in this genre) and women in those ads are almost exclusively (94,8 % of all user roles in all product categories in the women's genres) shown as users, wearing the advertised lipstick, jeans and the like.

As mentioned above, there are three other groups of researchers that have analyzed the functional roles of adults in advertisements (Sexton and Haberman, 1974; Easton and Toner, 1983; Reese et al., 1987). They have all, however, distinguished slightly different roles in relation to the product than the current study and their samples differed considerably from the selection of magazines of this study, hence, our results cannot be compared with their findings.

6.3 Dominance roles

The findings for dominance roles are directly comparable with the results of Klassen et al. (1993) who compared the same three magazine genres from three time periods (1972–77, 1987–83 and 1984–89). Hence, our study of American magazine advertisements could be viewed as an extension of their trend data (even though different magazines were used in our sample). Magazines analyzed by Klassen et al. (1993) were American editions of *Newsweek* (general interest magazine), *Ms.* (women's

magazine) and *Playboy* (men’s magazine).

First of all, Klassen et al. (1993) have found significant differences not only between magazine genre and type of pose (i.e. portrayal) but also between the type of portrayal and time interval. In the general interest and men’s magazines the shares of reverse poses have increased considerably over time, while the shares of traditional ads were decreasing in both genres. The reverse pose has increased significantly over time only in men’s magazines. The results for the women’s magazine did not differ significantly over time. Comparing the shares of different poses across three genres in the last studied decade (1984–89), traditional ads were most often found in general interest and men’s magazines (77% and 76% respectively, 64% in the women’s title). Reverse poses were found only in 10% and 14% of ads in general and men’s magazines respectively, and in 23% of ads in the women’s magazine. The shares of equality ads were equally low, 14% for general interest, 10% for men’s and 13% for the women’s magazines.

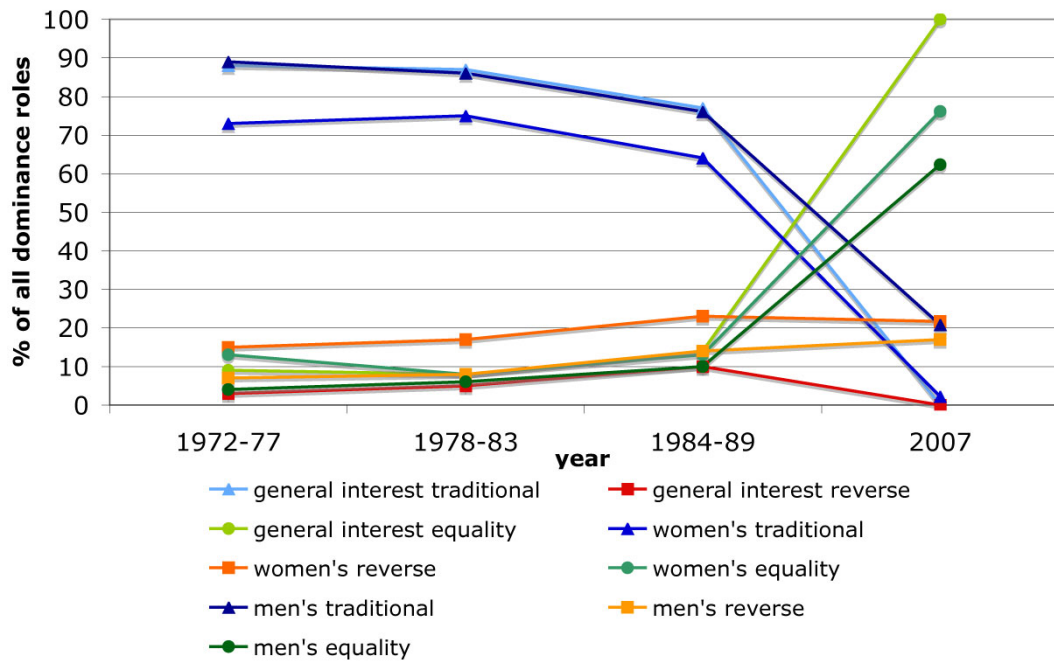


Figure 5: Comparison of the proportions of dominance roles in three magazine genres derived from the current study and the findings by Klassen et al. (1993) for the three time periods: 1972–77, 1978–83, 1984–89. *The most prominent change in the data from the late 1990s to 2007 is the increase in the proportion of equality roles depicted in advertising. At the same time the proportions of traditional roles portrayed have decreased in all genres, while the proportions of reverse role portrayal remained relatively unchanged and low over time.*

We have also found a significant association between the type of dominance role portrayal and magazine genre in the U.S. ($\chi^2 = 60,6$; $df = 6$; $p < 0,001$), yet, the general interest magazines had to be excluded from this analysis due to too low expected count. The major difference between the results for American magazines from late 1980s and the current ones is that the shares of equality portrayals are

now as high as the traditional ones in the previous study (upper 20%, see figure 5⁷). This is a tremendous switch for equality representations from 14% (general interest, 1984–89) as the highest share of all genres to 62,3% and 76,1% in the case of American men’s and women’s titles in 2007, respectively.

Our results make it clear that the share of equality ads has been rising considerably over time in all American magazines and are occupying the highest percentiles, while the traditional portrayals have been decreasing and dropped by almost 50% to approx. 20% share in American men’s magazines (with the very low 2,2% share in the women’s titles). The reverse poses, however, have not changed much over the last almost two decades. In the American women’s magazines they have reached only 21,7% of share while were at 23% in the 1980s, so overall they have remained stable in women’s magazines and not very much higher for the other two genres.

Taking the American case as an example, the switch from traditional to equality portrayal as being the dominant one in all genres within the past thirty years is outstanding. It is a highly positive outcome that may cast some positive light onto advertising techniques, that have managed over time to accommodate well to the increasing equality between the genders in the society. Yet, interesting inter-genre differences were found. Similar findings hold true for Germany and Poland, therefore, no cross-cultural differences were found for this gender role portrayal.

6.4 Standardization within genres

Our research has revealed several results that were consistent within the same magazine genre in all of the studied countries (family roles in women’s magazines, recreational, user and three dominance roles in all genres), while there were fewer findings that were similar across all genres (working roles in the U.S., family and endorser roles in Germany, recreational roles in all countries, none of the dominance roles). This implies, that due to substantial inter-genre differences very little generalization can be done for individual countries, and gender role portrayals are to a large extent standardized across Germany, Poland and the U.S within the *same* genre.

These results justify the method of comparing gender role portrayals *separately* for different genre categories as there are major differences in the portrayal of men and women across them. Merging genres with the aim of drawing a bigger picture of what is contained in the country’s magazine advertising on the whole can lead to a severe bias and is likely to conceal differences in the portrayals of men and women across the genres. Creating a representative sample of advertisements coming from different magazine genres that would avoid such bias is a challenging task. It is also desirable only if one of the research aims is to study the overall gender roles available in the print media. A desirable design would then consist of more than three magazine genres and the weighting of data would be necessary so that each genre is given the same influence on the results. Weighting, however, has never been included in any of the previous studies that have generalized their results for the entire country’s magazine advertising. To give an example of the limitation of such an approach, we have shown that women’s magazines usually contain considerably

⁷The graph in figure 5 is only a visual representation of results from the two studies. Please note, that the studies quoted are not based on the same magazine samples and significance tests of these results are omitted. However, they all were based on a very similar selection of three magazine genres that were coded using the same categories.

more ads than the general interest magazines (up to three times as many) and present genders differently than the other genres. Hence, drawing conclusions from the sample in which the majority of ads comes from women's magazines will in fact reflect the dominant gender roles present in this single genre and not a variety of roles present in different genres.

6.5 Traditional portrayals in different genres

Women's magazines. Some studies have revealed, that women are more aware than men of stereotyping in ads (Lull et al., 1977) and are not supportive of the limited portrayal of female roles in the media (Sciglimpaglia et al., 1979; Ford et al., 1991), thus more progressive images of women are more effective in ads targeted at women (Kelly et al., 1977; Leavitt, 1978; Batros, 1982). In this case, advertising in women's magazines should avoid large proportions of traditional portrayals of women. Our results show three instances, consistent across Germany, Poland and the U.S., in which women have: emancipated from their 'primary' role as family caretakers (there were more men than women found in family roles), gained importance in relation to the product (more women than men were portrayed in user roles), and finally have gained dominance over men in relationship portrayals (the second most often found portrayal of a men-women relationship, after the equality portrayal, was the reverse role). Yet, there was also an example of more traditional gender portrayals found within women's magazines in all studied countries: there were more men than women portrayed in working and recreational roles, which implies that employed and active women are still underrepresented in women's magazine advertising.

General interest and men's magazines. Men's magazines are targeted at men and therefore it is not surprising that they are prone to presenting men and women in traditional roles; women being often objectified and dependent on men. Yet, several of such negative portrayals were found to be common for not only men's but also general interests titles, that in theory should be less susceptible to negative stereotyping of women, as women are a large proportion of their readers. For instance, men are more often than women portrayed as users, as physically active and less often than women in decorative roles in both genres. These titles also present a traditional dominance portrayal as the second most often found portrayal of a men-women relationship. There are no consistent results for the working and family roles found for these two genres.

In sum, women's magazines are doing fair in presenting women in non-traditional roles in their ads, however, a few traditional portrayals of men and women still persist in this magazine genre. In the advertisements from men's and general interest magazines the opposite was found; traditional and negative portrayals of women are still common. It is not surprising that men's magazines have not managed or even attempted to eliminate negative stereotyping of women; it is astonishing that general interest magazines that are supposed to contain a more balanced portrayal of genders do not differ very much from the men's magazines in the negative portrayals of women. The good news is, however, that all three genres present equality ads much more often than traditional or reverse ads.

6.6 The most important cross-cultural differences

Due to the standardization of several gender roles across genres there are only few important differences between the countries studied.

First, the proportion of men and women in working roles was found to be almost equal in German and Polish general interest magazines, while there were almost twice as many men as women portrayed in working roles in American general interest titles. This result implies that only the American general interest magazines discriminate against one gender in this magazine genre, while the magazines from the remaining two countries have a much more balanced portrayal of gender in occupational roles when presenting it to the audience that is also composed of both men and women. In the remaining two genres, German women's and Polish men's magazines portray less women than men as workers, just like in the case of American titles. However, German men's and Polish women's titles do not have this tendency and remain unbiased.

Second, except for the women's magazines, in which men were more often found in family roles than women in all countries, different results were found in each country for each genre. And, as mentioned above, American general interest titles were the only ones that presented the actors in a traditional way, more women than men shown in a family setting. Other genres have shown equal proportions or more men than women.

Third, in most of magazine genres the shares of women and men presented as product's endorsers were very similar, except for the ads in Polish and American men's titles which have portrayed more often women in the endorsing role. American general interest magazines were the only ones with ads in which more men were found to be in this role.

There were no important country differences found in the portrayal of recreational, decorative, user and symbolic roles.

6.7 Globalization of gender roles in advertising

Our above conclusions suggest that there is a large similarity of portrayals of gender roles found in the three studied countries for separate magazine genre categories. The frequencies of portrayals of different roles are not identical in all instances, but seem to be going in very similar directions. It can be a sign of international advertising becoming more globalized or just a reflection of cultural similarities between the studied countries. There is unfortunately not enough prior cross-cultural research conducted to determine whether in the study of 2007 we have found more similarities between the countries than have existed before. One thing is clearly visible in our results: each magazine genre has its own style of presenting gender to its audience and it is uniform in the three studied countries.

In the previous studies researchers have claimed that the portrayal of gender in advertising was bound to cultural landscape of the country of its origin (Robbins and Paksoy, 1989) and several differences between countries were found (Wiles et al., 1995), an argument against the possibility of standardization of advertising across different countries. In our study these differences seem less important due to the overwhelming similarity of gender roles within each magazine genre.

7 Study evaluation and limitations

The analysis of advertising content in this study was based on a very detailed coding scheme that was partly innovative and partly based on established practices from previous research. Two coders were trained to do the coding and the inter-rater agreement was substantial or almost perfect for all variables, including the interpretative ones. Moreover, the coders were of different gender that enhanced the reliability of their coding by avoiding a gender bias. Hence, it can be concluded that the study produced valid and reliable results. Yet, there are still a few limitations of the above research.

Number of ads. One of the major limitations of the current study is a low number of ads in a few categories, e.g. ads from American general interest magazine for the dominance category in which only ten ads were coded. Such low counts did not allow this genre to be included in the test of statistical significance and it has remained outside the analysis for the most part. A larger magazine sample would have avoided this problem.

Coding categories. One of the categories adopted from the previous studies, the decorative role, turned out to have overwhelmingly high proportions (ranging from 46,3% to 97,3%), which implies that certain diversity might have been concealed by it. As suggested before, a break down of this category into subcategories would be helpful in a future follow-up of the study.

Another interesting innovation to the study could be diversification of the dominance role. In certain ads the power dimension displayed by a certain gender is much more obvious and provoking than in others, where it appears to be more subtle. It would be helpful to code this difference in the strength of dominance portrayal, especially for the later use of these ads in a psychological experiment. Having placed the coded ads in a spectrum from the most negative to the most subtle gender dominance portrayals would be helpful in interpreting how negatively certain gender is portrayed in a particular genre. Since some of the ads categorized as reverse or traditional were coded based on simple cues, like body position, body size or eye contact, which are much less telling than those that were coded based on sexual cues, occupational contrasts and explicit negative stereotypes.

Trend data. Finally, our attempt at drawing a trend line between the results from 1970s and 2007 might be a misleading one, as it ignores three decades in between, that might have contained important changes. Unfortunately, no reports that could be directly comparable have been found for these years.

8 Further research

The current research is an important contribution to the study of gender roles in magazine advertising outside the U.S. However, this single effort does not solve the existing imbalance in literature and therefore investigations in further countries are needed. Moreover, it is highly recommended that researchers use some common gender issue and study design (especially sampling and coding) to make results from different studies more directly comparable. This research has exemplified, how hard it is to compare the results of different studies when the sample of ads, magazine genres and especially the selection of themes is so varied. The study

of, for instance, working and nonworking roles across multiple countries by different researchers would be more beneficial to the existing body of research than a few new studies investigating totally differing themes in different countries using different measures. Since one of the major aims of advertising research is to address the idea of standardization or globalization of advertising messages and in case of its absence to explore the cross-cultural differences. The most neglected regions in research on gender roles in European magazine advertising are Eastern and Southern countries. Further investigations of gender in magazine advertising are also needed in the Asian, African and South American regions.

Our call for research studying similar themes and using uniform designs does not mean that an extension of gender-related topics studied is discouraged. Several themes could be added into the investigation like the body language, facial expressions and emotions, dressing style, etc., that were rarely or never touched upon before. Children, teenagers and the elderly are also the three groups that were not given enough attention in the discussion of gender in advertising.

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Appendices

A Examples of coded advertisements

Below examples of all roles studied are presented, two examples of ads per category.

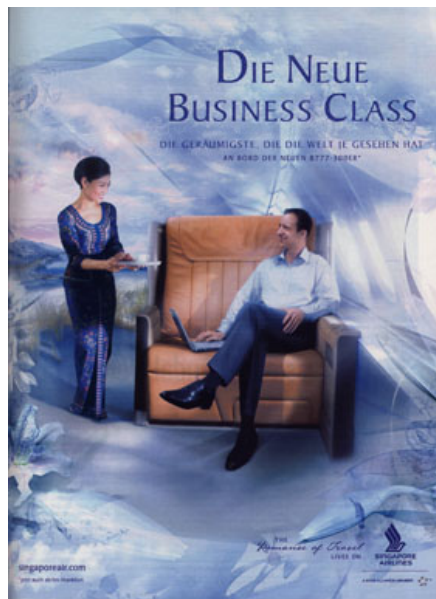


Figure 6: Woman in a working role.
Der Spiegel 19/2007:175



Figure 7: Men in working roles. *Der Spiegel* 42/2007:83



Figure 8: Woman in a family role. *O, The Oprah Magazine* 09/2007:5



Figure 9: Man in a family role. *Polityka* 10/2007:25

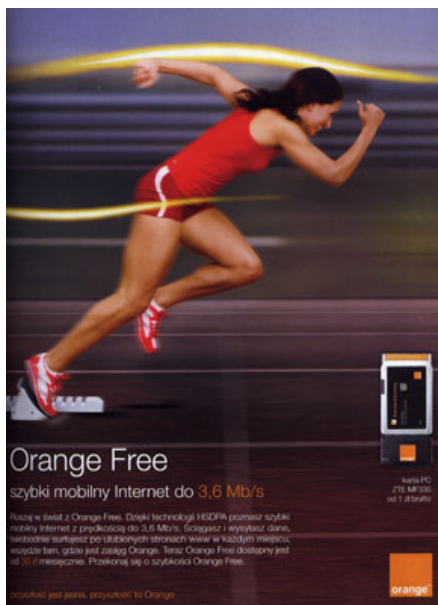


Figure 10: Woman in a recreational role. *Polish Playboy* 06/2007:9



Figure 11: Man in a recreational role. *Polish Playboy* 06/2007:146



Figure 12: Woman in a decorative role. *Elle* 09/2007:15



Figure 13: Man in a decorative role. *German Playboy* 06/2007:15



Figure 14: Woman in a user role. *German Cosmopolitan* 04/2007:4



Figure 15: Man in a user role. *Maxim* 09/2007:19



Figure 16: Woman in an endorsing role. *Polish Playboy* 06/2007:9



Figure 17: Man in an endorsing role. *Elle* 06/2007:81



Figure 18: Woman in a symbolic role. *American Playboy* 09/2007:149



Figure 19: Couple in a symbolic role. *German Cosmopolitan* 03/2007:179



Figure 20: Couple in a traditional ad.
American Playboy 12/2007:58



Figure 21: Group in a traditional ad.
German Playboy 12/2007:57



Figure 22: Couple in a reverse ad.
Elle 03/2007:183



Figure 23: Group in a reverse ad.
Maxim 09/2007:125



Figure 24: Couple in an equality ad.
Polish Playboy 12/2007:11



Figure 25: Group in an equality ad.
Focus 10/2007:131

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